

CURRENT STATUS OF CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for short term trading in gas, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining storage rights to at least a portion of one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities;

connecting a natural gas pipeline to the interior of the one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities, wherein the one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities operate at pressures in the range of 20 to 80 bars;

maintaining the pressure of the natural gas in the pipeline at nominally the same pressure as that of the one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities, such that when the supply of the gas is greater than the demand for the gas, a gas purchaser ~~may divert~~ diverts a portion of the gas in the gas pipeline to the gas storage facility from the gas pipeline and when the demand of the gas is greater than the supply of the gas, the gas purchaser ~~may divert~~ diverts a portion of the gas from the gas storage facility into the gas pipeline allowing for high flow rates both into and out of the low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities and for rapid reversal of flow;

acquiring rights to a portion of the contents of the gas storage facility;

maintaining buy and sell bids at all times with at least one bidder while retaining the ability to supply gas without matching with other buyers or sellers due to the high flow rates and the rapid reversal of flow; and

making at least one short term trade related to natural gas by using the one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities by receiving gas into or providing gas out of the one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities.

2. (Previously Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said short term of said at least one short term trade is less than 24 hours.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein said short term is less than 12 hours.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 3, wherein said short term is less than 6 hours.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein said short term is less than one hour.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 5, wherein said short term is less than thirty minutes.

Claims 7-13 (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A system operable for use in short term trading in gas, said system comprising:

at least one low pressure underground salt formation storage facility operating in the pressure range of 20 to 80 bars;

a natural gas pipeline connected with the at least one storage facility having natural gas therein with pressure in the pipeline maintained at nominally the same pressure as that of the

natural gas stored in the shallow depth underground salt formation storage facility, such that when the supply of the gas is greater than the demand for the gas, a gas purchaser diverts ~~may divert~~ a portion of the gas in the gas pipeline to the storage facility from the gas pipeline and when the demand of the gas is greater than the supply of the gas, the gas purchaser diverts ~~may divert~~ a portion of the gas from the storage facility into the gas pipeline allowing for high flow rates both into and out of the low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities and for rapid reversal of flow;

a trading system operable for making trades related to gas whereby rights to a portion of the contents of the gas storage facility have been obtained such that buy and sell bids are maintained with at least one bidder while retaining the ability to supply gas without matching with other buyers or sellers due to the high flow rates and the rapid reversal of flow; and

a gas facility computer system operable for controlling gas flow into and out of said at least one low pressure underground salt formation storage facility on a short term basis by compressing or decompressing natural gas in the pipeline to cause diversion of the portion of the gas to or from the storage facility.

Claims 15-41 (Cancelled)

42. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the step of making at least one short term trade related to natural gas by using the one or more low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities comprises reversing an existing flow of gas between the pipeline and at least one of the low pressure underground salt formation storage facilities.